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DETERMINANTS OF SALES WORKFORCE PERFORMANCE: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT **DOI No: 10.36713/epra27502** **Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra27502**

Sales workforce plays an integral role in business organizations, especially in revenue generation, which is required for the smooth running of businesses. Thus, it is important that organizations understand the factors that determine the performance of sales workforce. This knowledge will help business organizations design frameworks and strategies that are effective in enhancing the performance of their sales workforce, which in the long run is profitable for such organizations. Using a qualitative approach, the factors that determine the performance of sales workforce were investigated. A systematic search strategy was employed using keywords such as "salesforce performance," "salesperson effectiveness," "determinants of sales performance," "motivation in sales," "sales training," and "sales leadership." Inclusion criteria focused on studies published in English, with particular emphasis on works from the last 10–15 years. The thematic analysis of the articles was carried out to identify themes that depict determinants of sales workforce performance. The themes identified include organizational factors (extrinsic motivation and sales workforce training) and individual factors (interpersonal relations, sales workforce intelligence and resourcefulness, marketing skills, and marketing experience). This implies that individual factors combined with organizational factors can be leveraged on by businesses to improve the performance of sales workforce. This shows that organizational or individual factors may not be sufficient when considered independently as determinants of sales workforce performance. Hence, both should be prioritized and used together for optimum performance of sales workforce.

INTRODUCTION

The success of sales workforce is directly or indirectly related to the marketing and sales success of organizations. This means that the performance of sales workforce can benefit companies because the bottom line of firms is directly influenced by this performance, whether in long or short term (Cescon et al., 2019). The interactions and relationships sales workforce maintains with sellers and buyers result in the development of customer relations, loyalty, trust, value creation, and knowledge provision to management about the market (Yuliansyah et al., 2018). The role played by the sales workforce as relationship managers within the marketing unit is increasing crucial due to the ever-changing behavior and nature of customers (Hutahayan, 2020).

The role of sales workforce in firms cannot be over-emphasized regardless of the continuous advancement in technology as it has continued to expand. It is becoming expensive to recruit, select, and training sales workforce. Consequently, field managers seek to understand the factors that are critical to the performance of the sales workforce. This means sales managers seek to know factors that influence employees to put in their best (Bento et al., 2018; Imtiaz Ferdous et al., 2019). Furthermore, the recent and dramatic changes in business and consumer buying behavior is a challenge that selling organizations have to deal with, especially with regards to finding the most suitable approach to recalibrate performance measures for sales work force in response (Harjanto & Franklin, 2019). In response to that, researchers have conducted numerous studies with the aim of unveiling the factors that determine the performance of sale workforce.

There are several factors that sales companies consider as critical factors when they evaluate the effectiveness of sales workforce (Saif et al., 2022). The performance of sales workforce has been defined and evaluated from either or both objective and subjective perspectives. For example some scholars have defined and evaluated sales performance based on objective measures such as the number of new customers they are able to attract to the company as well as the number of units sold (Cescon et al., 2019; Yuliansyah et al., 2018). On the other hand, some researchers (e.g Ojra, et al.2022) have studied the performance of sales workforce in terms of subjective performance, focusing on variables like sales volume, customer relations, effectiveness of communication, cost control, proficiency in sales skills, and territory management. In response to this. Different studies have been carried out focusing on the factors that determine the performance of sales persons in different sectors such as food production sector in Iran (Azad et al., 2013); B2B enterprises (Safari & Babazadeh, 2024); Insurance Sector in Ghana (Yamoah, 2013); Information Service Sector in China (Nguyen et al., 2022) and amongst Small and Medium Enterprises in Malaysia (Saif et al., 2022). However, there are no studies that have investigated the performance of sales workforce in the construction industry despite the wide variety of construction

materials that sales workforce in the construction industry seek to sell through professional selling coupled with the difficulties many construction enterprises face in selling their services and products (Walker et al., 2008). Hence, this study addresses this gap by investigating the factors that determine sales workforce performance in the construction industry in order to understand how best sales can be increased through sales workforce performance.

Lastly, many of the researches conducted in the construction industries have focused on other aspects of marketing in the construction industry such as Marketing and adoption challenges of sustainable construction materials in the USA market (Jolaoso, 2022); the prospects, challenges, and strategies of marketing construction materials (Yankah & Dadzie, 2015); and perceptions, challenges and solutions of marketing eco-labelled construction materials (Gupte & Deshmukh, 2025). However, the review of literature shows that none has examined the determinants of sales workforce performance despite the key role it plays in the sales of the construction product. More so, only few studies have been conducted on the challenges faced by sales workforce within the construction industry. Consequently, study also examines the challenges of sales workforce within the construction industry.

This paper uses a conceptual review approach to examine the determinants of sales performance amongst sales workforce as well as the challenges faced by sales workforce.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Concepts

i. Sales Workforce

The growth of small and medium-sized businesses (including direct sales businesses) has created additional job opportunities (Yang et al., 2018), one of which is professional selling. For over decade, the area of professional selling has experienced huge transformations, with continuous flux. One of those transformations is related to the best strategies of achieving sales workforce performance and how it can be measured (Kerr & Marco-Cuevas, 2023). Professional selling has been transformed over the last decade and is in constant flux.

Sales workforce is regarded as a critical marketing asset because it is the main point of contact between a company and its clients (Iyadi & Itimi, 2023), and key to sales performance. More so, the roles of salespeople is boundless because they are a link between a company and its surroundings (Baldauf & Cravens, 2002). The performance of sales workforce can be evaluated using different indices including revenue, sales growth, retention, client acquisition, as well as sales workforce productivity. The sales workforce can stimulate the decision to purchase through the direct and personal influence they have on potential buyers (Iyadi & Oruakpor, 2023). Iyadi and Itimi (2023) noted that the collective sales performance of a company is influenced by the performance of individual salespeople. Regardless of the frequency, whether, yearly, monthly, or even on a quarterly basis, sales performance is measured by how sales workforce achieve their sales goals within a given period of time. Traditionally, the performance of sales workforce has been measured in terms of the selling abilities of the sales workforce (Churchill, Ford, Johnson, & Walker, 2022). According to these authors, the success of the workforce is reliant on the sales skills, aptitude, motivation, job perception, and personality of sales workforce. More so, other researchers have noted that there are three key talents that influence the performance of sales workforce including, interpersonal skills, salesmanship dedication, and intelligence (Rentz, Shepherd, Armen, Tashchian, Dabholkar, & Ladd, 2023).

Business are interested in gaining knowledge on how the performance and effectiveness of sales workforce can be measured and determined (Kuster and Canales, 2008). This is important because businesses depend on the effectiveness and performance of sales workforce due to the impact this has on their companies (Ingram et al., 2001; Olson et al., 2001). Another reason why the performance of salesperson is of great concern is to enable enterprises analyse the entire activities sales workforce engage in when the carry out their duties. Thus, it is crucial for organizations to manage sales workforce in a manner that supports the overall success of the company by planning, organizing, directing, and controlling personal selling efforts. More so, the overall sales performance of organizations can be improved through the integration of other elements within the marketing mix (Hutt and Speh, 2010, p.413). The measurement of sales performance can be carried out in two ways based on the assertions made by Ingram (2006) including 1). Results-based perspectives and 2). Behavior-based perspectives. The former involves the objective measure of outcomes with little monitoring by the sales manager, while the behavior-based perspective of measuring sales performance focuses on using a subjective and complex form of evaluation of the characteristics and behavior that allows the sales manager to adequately monitor the behavior of the sales workforce.

ii. Sales Performance

Authors have defined the concept of sales performance in different ways, but typically, it is defined as the effectiveness in terms of objective outcomes like market share, sales volume, number of new customers, percentage of achieved quota, etc. Also, it is been defined as "behavior that has been evaluated in terms of its contribution to the goals of organization." (Walker et al., 1979, p. 33, 35). Proponents of this position argue that effectiveness may not be considered as the appropriate measure, given that, outcomes which can be measured quantitatively depend on specific factors outside the control of sales workforce like market-related factors. The measurement of sales performance can be done based of subjective self-or manager-reported behavior-based measures. Within another school of thought, sales performance is conceptualized along the lines of both effectiveness and behaviours (Anderson & Oliver, 1987). In the current study, sales performance is considered from the aforementioned perspectives to provide a broader insight on the concept.

Often times, sales performance is measured using self-report of manager-report, objective or subjective, relational vs. outcome kind of sales. In the work carried out by Chawla et al. (2020) the use of performance of orientations was deployed in studying sales performance, i.e. internally oriented measures vs. market-based measures (e.g., sales volume and customer satisfaction, respectively. Depending on which measures fit a firm's context, a wide variety could be used. For example, a company that is launching a new product may decide to utilize both the sales of the new and current products alongside objective measures like sales growth and volume. However, with technological

advancement in sales such as cloud-based applications like salesforce and CRM tools that are used in capturing different performance data, the use of multiple measures may emerge as a popular and dependable method of evaluating sales performance.

According to Dwyer (2009), sales performance is measured in two ways. Measurement results record performance on important results such as sales volume, total revenue, total profit contribution, number of new customers, and sales increase from old customers. These numbers can be compared to performance quotas or results to determine whether goals are achieved.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SALES WORKFORCE PERFORMANCE

The Influence of Training, Marketing skills, and Marketing Experience

The review of existing literature in the area of sales workforce performance, as well as the factors that influence the performance of sales workforce shows that a huge amount of research has been carried out in the area of sales performance of sales workforce, with variations on the factors and variables investigated. Some of the factors that have been reported as determinants of sales workforce performance are discussed in this subsection.

i. Salesforce Training Influence on Sales Workforce Performance

Salesforce training has been analysed as a determinant of sales workforce performance, and as such, training programs should be adequately prepared for (Hutt & Speh, 2010). Therefore, it is crucial that periodic trainings are scheduled for sales workforce in order to improve the skills of experienced sales workforce, especially in the era where the marketplace is dynamic. The sales workforce must be equipped with the knowledge about the product line, the company, competitors, customer segment, and effective communication. Thus, it becomes paramount for the company to provide sales workforce including newly recruited salespeople, the Sales Representative, and Technical Sales Representative prior to their assignment in the marketplace. The training which is offered to sales workforce should cover marketing areas such as goal setting, customers farming, salesmanship, and time-setting as well as procedures of sales administration. Such trainings can support experienced sales workforce in terms of achieving the company goals and targets. The nature of the training will be determined based on the company needs of even based on the need analysis training for workforce.

ii. The Influence of Technical and Marketing Skills on Salesworkforce Performance

Salespeople's ability to provide information regarding product design and specifications, as well as the uses and capabilities of both goods and services, is referred to as technical knowledge. Additionally, salespeople are knowledgeable about the market, consumers, and products; they also have an understanding of competitors' offerings, policies, and product lines. Finally, they are aware of competitors' markets and products. These make up a salesperson's marketing ability. Thus, a salesperson's level of knowledge about the industry in which they work is referred to by both knowledge assets. A salesman's ability to navigate the complex market environment is facilitated by having a broad knowledge base. According to Sujan et al. (1988b), salespeople that are more successful are acknowledged to have more comprehensive and connected knowledge bases about their clients. Weitz (2020) also proposed that performance and strategy formulation competencies (i.e., requiring in-depth knowledge of the market, rivals, products, etc.) had a substantial positive link. Further evidence that marketing abilities affect salesperson effectiveness came from Ahearne and Schillewaert (2000). A study carried out by Tesfagiyorgis (2018) focused on investigating the effect of influence of sales skills dimensions on the performance of sales people in the construction industry in Ethiopia. The three dimensions of sales performance including salesmanship, technical skills, interpersonal skills, and marketing skills were investigated using quantitative research design, specifically correlational research method. Findings of bivariate correlation analysis between sales skills and sales performance revealed that there is statistically significant relationship between all the sales scales and sales workforce and performance. It was also reported that marketing skills, interpersonal skills, and technical skills were predictors of salesperson performance. However, salesperson performance was not influenced by salesmanship skills.

According to Sengupta et al. (2022), there were two more individual level variables that significantly influenced the efficacy or performance of salespeople: strategic ability and entrepreneurial ability. Salespeople's ability to provide information regarding product design and specifications, as well as the uses and capabilities of both goods and services, is referred to as technical knowledge. Additionally, salespeople are knowledgeable about the market, consumers, and products; they also have an understanding of competitors' offerings, policies, and product lines. Finally, they are aware of competitors' markets and products. These make up a salesperson's marketing ability. Thus, a salesperson's level of knowledge about the industry in which they work is referred to by both knowledge assets. A salesman's ability to navigate the complex market environment is facilitated by having a broad knowledge base. According to Sujan et al. (1988b), salespeople that are more successful are acknowledged to have more comprehensive and connected knowledge bases about their clients. Weitz (2020) also proposed that performance and strategy formulation competencies (i.e., requiring in-depth knowledge of the market, rivals, products, etc.) had a substantial positive link. Further evidence that marketing abilities affect salesperson effectiveness came from Ahearne and Schillewaert (2000). According to Sengupta et al. (2022), there were two more individual-level variables that significantly influenced the efficacy or performance of salespeople: strategic ability and entrepreneurial ability.

iii. The Influence of Experience and Sales Workforce Performance

Experience is one of the most important factors in the salesperson’s performance. Higher selling experience suggests that dealer will get more chances to interact with a verity of clients and gain a great amount of knowledge and understanding Nwude & Uduji (2013). Salespersons who have the wide-ranging work experience will have profound understanding of organization and have experienced the events that can occur mostly in the job (Kavoosi, Sadeghian & Mahmudi (2014). Ali & Farzaneh (20120 have concluded that

experience of sales person may directly be linked with sales person performance but many other factors can effects the sales performance. This research suggests that experienced salespeople in adaptive selling have more skills and meet better the needs of their customers and this leads to high levels of customer satisfaction and thus improve performance.

Empirical Review

This section presents related studies that have been conducted by other scholars, critically examining contexts, and key themes across those studies, while highlighting extant gaps.

In a study carried out by Yotapditya and Sibarani (2024), the influence of training hours and sales staff on retail performance within a period of two years. This study employed the use of quantitative time series analysis to achieve the study aim. The findings revealed that the performance of retail sales staff is significantly influenced by the two variables, with the training hours having a greater effect. Their results showed that the monthly gross merchandise value improved according to the number of training hours and each salesperson. The findings highlighted the significance of sales training, because sales outcome can be improved by having a well-trained sales workforce. Consequently, the authors recommended that a balanced strategy should prioritize quality training for the optimization of sales success. As part of their recommendations for future studies, they noted the importance of studying other factors that like market conditions and customer satisfaction and the influence they have on sales performance.

Similarly, the role of sales force in improving revenue was investigated in a study conducted by Azad et al. (2013). The study which was carried out using factor analysis involved 353 sales persons from a diary company in Iran. Sales workforce plays an important role in improving revenue growth and boosting sales' figures. It was reported that seven factors influence sales performance including motivation of sales person, personality, capability, personal traits, content information, and personal interest. The importance of sales force on improving the growth of revenue and increasing sales figures has been emphasized by these authors using the Anderson theory of the firm which connotes that goal setting and strategic planning process can benefit from marketing.

The search for a framework for determining the key factors that enhances sales performance has been necessitated the critical role sales performance plays in the growth of enterprises. Therefore, Safari and Babazadeh (2024) focused on proposing a framework that can be used in determining the major factors that affect success of sales performance, particularly, within the context of B2B. This was done using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, where qualitative systematic reviews and interviews were conducted. Their findings showed that there are 31 factors related to four (4) dimensions including organizational, environmental, individual, and customer factors that may influence the success of B2B sales workforce performance.

Within the context of Ghana, Yamoah (2013) conducted a study which focused on examining the factors that influence the performance of sales personnel in insurance companies in Ghana. The use of quantitative descriptive method was deployed in this investigation, with a focus on factors such as personnel resourcefulness and motivation that influence performance of sales personnel. Using descriptive survey methodology, data was collected from sales personnel of ten insurance companies in Ghana. They reported that motivation is a primary factor that influences the performance of sales work force in insurance sector.

Saif, et al. (2022) conducted a study in which they investigated the sustainable factors that influence sales performance in Malaysia direct sales sector, characterized by small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). The study which was specifically carried out within the Klang Valley of Malaysia, used a descriptive analysis and structural path analysis to analyse the relationships between the variables. The respondents of the study were 207 working professionals in SMEs in Malaysia. Variables such as motivation, job satisfaction, remuneration, value placed on the profession, work-life balance were studied. Their findings showed that the performance of sales workforce in Malaysia were levels of individuals' motivation, remuneration, and the value they placed on the profession. However, work-life balance of employees was not found to have correlation with sales performance. They concluded that SMEs need to increase the incentives and remuneration of employees in order to improve sales performance through management.

Using a meta-analysis approach, Kuerr and Marco-Cuevos (2023) studied the determinants of sales workforce performance. Their study involved the meta-analysis of 150 studies, 936 raw effects, and 10 moderating variables form the period of 2009-2020. Through this approach, they identified and reported 19 key determinants of sales workforce performance, ranging from universal to context-specific factors. They also found some weak but significant determinants. Their findings revealed that the relationship between sales determinants and performance outcomes is moderated by operationalization of sales workforce performance.

Chawla et al. (2020), carried out a study that focused on investigating the determinants of sales performance based on the changes that have occurred in the field of sales such as increased stress caused by addition of technological responsibilities, the evolution of sales roles to more strategic roles, and decrease in sources of social support. The work done by these authors is an extension of Verbeke *et al.*'s (2011), who introduced a scheme for the classification of determinants of sales performance prior to the transformations that have occurred in the sales domain. In their work, the authors carried out a systematic review of sales performance from 1983 to 2028 with the aim of proposing an extended versions of Verbeke *et al.*'s (2011) classification. The use of a systematic approach was employed based on five sequential steps (search, selection, quality control, extraction and synthesis) recommended by Tranfield et al. (2003). Their review involved 261 peer-reviewed journal articles from 36 journals. Based on the systematic review, the authors added technological determinants of sales performance, strategic and nonstrategic activities as a new category, and job-related psychosocial factors as a broader category. The reported three subcategories within the category of job-related psychosocial factors including psychological demands (encompasses role

perceptions and digital-age stressors such as technostress creators), job control and work-related social support.

Similarly, Herjanto and Franklin (2020), in response to the dramatic change in business and consumer buying behavior, conducted a contemporary systematic review to ascertain the key factors that derive performance of a salesperson. The use of meta-analysis was employed by the authors using 250 journal articles published from 1986 to 2017, which were then synthesized into a typology of salesperson performance. The authors reported organization, personal, co-worker, situational and buyer dimensions as responsible for improving the performance of sale workforce.

Nowlin et al. (2017) conducted a research with the aim of examining the process through which sales workforce improve their performance. These researchers were of the opinion that the connectedness sales workforce have with their coworkers. Based on this believe, they focused on study how connectedness with coworkers determines the performance of sales workforce. Their study was based on the theory of social exchange, showing the processes by which this relationship occurs, and the conditionality of the process itself. It was noted that salesperson performance can be increased by one or two paths, based on the internal volatility. It was reported that, by means of the connectedness, the performance of sales workforce is increased either through the implementation of sales strategy or through the selling itself, or even both. Based on their findings, connectedness increases under conditions of high volatility like manager turnover through selling effort. Within this context, the sales strategy is provided by the management, which allows sales workforce to interact with each other, thereby increasing the level of performance. They also noted that when there is average level of internal volatility, connectedness heightens sales performance through the selling effort and implementation of sales strategy. The authors highlighted the importance of connectedness to the performance of sales workforce.

In the work done by Nguyen et al., (2022) the determinants of salesperson performance were investigated, with a focus on the role played by customer-centric selling behaviours on Quanxi, which is kind of measurement for the quality of interaction between sales workforce and customer. These authors, studied two widely used constructs within the literature of sales including, adaptive selling behavior and customer orientation. A sample of 204 salespeople working in the information service industry were recruited as sample for the study, with the authors testing different hypotheses through the use of structural equation modelling. The findings of their study shows that the deployment of customer-centric behaviours and adaptive selling could support sales workforce in improving their performance. Also, the sales performance B2B sales workforce may be explained by Quanxi. Within the setting of B2B, sales workforce is a crucial link between a company and its customers. Consequently having an understanding of their performance is crucial to sales managers. understanding their performance is a key concern of sales managers as well as researchers in the discipline.

Rodriquez et al. (2023) studied how intrinsic and extrinsic factors of motivation can influence the ability of salesforce to perform their sales roles. Using a meta-analysis approach these authors highlighted three key classes of individual motivations that are key to sales performance including goal orientation, cognitive choice, and work engagement. Nevertheless, it has been argued by scholars of sales management and marketing that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors have an influence on overall sales performance. Their study was specifically aimed at testing a six-dimensional framework of business-to-business (B2B) sellers' motivations in sales performance in the context of Norway Setting: The application of a six-dimensional framework on sales performance within a Norwegian context. Different companies from multiple industries operating in the product-orientated sector of Norway were selected to measure the relevance of the six-dimensional framework to sales performance in these companies. In total, 236 usable questionnaires representing multiple industries of different sizes across Norway were used. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires. The findings indicate that the dimensions of B2B sellers' motivations are relevant in a B2B sales setting. Therefore, sales businesses operating in a B2B environment need to become increasingly aware that motivations drive sellers to achieve their goals. The study offers an increased understanding on how to structure B2B sellers' motivations in a six-dimensional framework, including cognitive choice, goal orientation, and work engagement. Contribution: The study develops an improved understanding of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that influence the sales performance of B2B sellers. Furthermore, it contributes to an increased understanding of how to structure B2B sellers' motivations in a six-dimensional framework.

Jolaosa 2022) noted that the construction industry is one of the leading contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for nearly 39% of global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions (UN Environment, 2019). According to the author, the sector remains a key area of concern in US due to its extensive use of energy-intensive materials like concrete and steel. Sustainable building materials, derived from renewable or recycled resources, present an opportunity to reduce the environmental footprint of construction projects while promoting energy efficiency and resource conservation. Despite their benefits, the adoption and marketing of sustainable materials in the U.S. face several challenges. High initial costs, limited public awareness, and entrenched industry practices hinder widespread adoption. Moreover, sustainable materials often compete with traditional options that are deeply rooted in cultural and industrial preferences. Regulatory frameworks in the U.S. are fragmented, with some states and municipalities leading the way in green building policies, while others lag behind. This paper explores the barriers to the adoption of sustainable building materials in the United States, with a focus on economic, social, and regulatory challenges. Drawing on case studies and market analysis, it offers actionable recommendations for stakeholders, including policymakers, industry leaders, and consumers. These include policy reforms, public awareness campaigns, and incentives to accelerate the transition toward greener construction practices

Yeon and Hwang (2016) investigated the factors that influence sales performance of salespersons within the business software industry. The use of multiple items was employed in studying the independent variable, with both behavior and outcome indicators used. The independent variables used in their study was derived from the classification of Verbeke et al. (2011)

including role ambiguity, work engagement, degree of adaptiveness, and sales related knowledge. The findings of their study revealed that two of these variables which are work engagement and sales-related knowledge, while role ambiguity and degree of adaptiveness were not.

In a study carried out by Nwude and Uduji (2013) the impact of selected rewards on the performance of sales managers was studied. These authors investigated financial and non-financial rewards as factors that influence performance of sales workforce in the manufacturing industry. In order to predict interaction outcome and inter-dependency among the study variables. Findings of their study showed that commission incentive, salary compensation, bonus payment, recognition opportunity for promotion and advancement were the factors that accounted for 85% variance, implying that these were the key variables that influence sales workforce effectiveness and motivation.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach using a conceptual review design to examine the determinants of sales workforce performance. The conceptual review method is appropriate because the study does not involve primary data collection but instead synthesizes existing theoretical and empirical literature to develop an integrated understanding of the key factors influencing sales performance.

Data for the study were obtained from secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, textbooks, conference papers, and reputable industry reports. Relevant literature was sourced from established academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. The selection of materials was guided by relevance, recency, methodological rigor, and citation impact to ensure the inclusion of high-quality and credible sources.

A systematic search strategy was employed using keywords such as “salesforce performance,” “salesperson effectiveness,” “determinants of sales performance,” “motivation in sales,” “sales training,” and “sales leadership.” Inclusion criteria focused on studies published in English, with particular emphasis on works from the last 10–15 years, while seminal earlier studies were also considered where necessary. Studies that were not directly related to sales workforce performance or lacked methodological clarity were excluded.

The data were analyzed using thematic content analysis, which involved identifying, categorizing, and synthesizing recurring themes and patterns across the literature. Key determinants of sales workforce performance were grouped into conceptual categories individual factors and organizational factors. To enhance the rigor and credibility of the study, multiple sources were cross-checked, and consistent themes were validated across different authors and contexts. The study also acknowledges potential limitations associated with conceptual reviews, including reliance on existing literature and the absence of empirical validation.

Overall, this methodology provides a structured and comprehensive approach to synthesizing knowledge on the determinants of sales workforce performance and offers a foundation for future empirical research.

FINDINGS

Factors that Influence the Performance of Sales workforce

Due to the need to expand the body of knowledge on performance of sales workforce several researchers have investigated different factors or variables that influence the performance of sales workforce. Some of those factors have been analysed in the previous section containing review of related studies. This section provides an analysis of those factors based of personal and organizational factors.

I. Individual Factors

a. Interpersonal Relations

Studies have shown that interpersonal relations with both customers and co-workers is a personal factor that influences sales workforce performance, and it has been described as an act that births favor and reciprocal duty, enabling sales workforce to leverage on networks. In recent times, interpersonal relationship has become a powerful tool for achieving successful marketing goals (Igwebuike & Iyadi, 2021). Nguyen et al., (2022) in their study showed that customer-centric behavior such as interpersonal relationship that demonstrates quality interaction between sales workforce and customer impacts on the performance of sales workforce. Iyadi and Edeme (2022) noted that understanding customers through meaning interactions and engagement is a significant aspect of marketing. Due to the growing importance of this aspect of marketing, businesses provide a marketing strategy that incorporates relationship marketing that encapsulates the vision and ideology of particular business while providing solutions to the needs of customers (Iyadi, 2023). This idea of salesperson-customer relationship is what other researchers have referred to as relationship marketing (e.g. Hunt & Baruch, 2021). The significance of interpersonal relationship within the domain of marketing has evolved into a circle of connections, and this implies that companies must establish quality interactions with their clients and customers as a strategy for achieving marketing goals and organizational prosperity (Olannye, 2017). The basis for interpersonal interactions between sales workforce and customers is the social interactions that they have with each other (Wright, 2022). It has been noted that consumers’ experiences grow out of the interactions they have with a business (Iyadi & Assay, 2019). This does not only create their experiences, but also gives them a sense of belonging and fosters strong bonds between customers and businesses.

On the other hand, it has been found that interpersonal relationship with co-workers can improve sales workforce performance according to Nowlin et al. (2017) the connectedness sales workforce have with their coworkers is key to better performance. Based on this believe, they focused on study how connectedness with coworkers determines the performance of sales workforce. This significant aspect of interpersonal relationship with co-workers was emphasized using the social exchange theory, showing the processes by which this relationship occurs, and the conditionality of the process itself. It was noted that salesperson performance can be increased by one or two paths, based on the internal volatility. It was reported that, by means of the connectedness, the performance of sales workforce is increased either through the implementation of sales strategy or through the selling itself, or even both. Based on their findings, connectedness increases under conditions of high volatility like manager turnover

through selling effort. Within this context, the sales strategy is provided by the management, which allows sales workforce to interact with each other, thereby increasing the level of performance. Sales workforce performance can be heightened by connectedness and internal volatility through the selling effort and implementation of sales strategy.

b. Sales workforce Intelligence and Personnel Resourcefulness

The intelligence of the sales workforce is a dimension of personal factors that have been investigated from as far back as 1990, and subsequently, researchers began to investigate it as a factor that influences the performance of sales workforce (Mayer et al., 2000). The phrase "Salesman's intelligence" has appeared in multiple studies in the literature of marketing and sales, it has been reported that the IQ of the salesman influences not just the job performance but motivation and happiness (Yoke & Panatik, 2021). Salesman intelligence has been discussed in the literature based on four dimensions including establishing relationship controlling emotions, identifying one's emotions, as well as identifying one's own emotions (Goleman, 2015; Tarurhor et al., 2022).

More so, the level to which the sales workforce is resourceful has an influence on performance. Yamoah (2013) showed that personnel resourcefulness, which is how much knowledge the sales workforce has, and is ready to use it for the benefit of the company.

c. Sales Workforce Marketing Skills

The literature review show that marketing skills of sales workforce can be divided into five subcategories including communication style, consultative selling, flexibility, questioning and bargaining subcategories of marketing skills. Previous studies have investigated the different subcategories separately, rather than all in a single study. For example, in the study conducted by Rentz (2023), the five factors were investigated independently. According to these authors adaptive selling which is referred to as the ability of salesperson to change the manner in which they connect with consumers to provide them with customized services. This aspect of marketing skill has been reported to have a correlation with different sales outcomes, including the performance of sales workforce (William et al., 2021). A sales workforce that is able to adapt their communication skill to the needs of their customers have a higher chance of having successful sales transaction with their customers. Consequently, sales workforce can derive happiness and satisfaction if they are able to deploy adaptable solutions that are responsive to the customers' needs. Complementary marketing skills, such as consultative selling techniques, excellent negotiation skills, the capacity to probe and question customer needs, and the possession of excellent verbal and nonverbal communication skills (Iyadi & Isikadi, 2024).

d. Experience of sales Workforce

Experience is one of the most important factors in the salesperson's performance. Higher selling experience suggests that dealer will get more chances to interact with a verity of clients and gain a great amount of knowledge and understanding Nwude & Uduji (2013). Salespersons who have the wide-ranging work experience will have profound understanding of organization and have experienced the events that can occur mostly in the job (Kavoosi, Sadeghian & Mahmudi (2014). Ali & Farzaneh (20120 have concluded that experience of sales person may directly be linked with sales person performance but many other factors can effects the sales performance. This research suggests that experienced salespeople in adaptive selling have more skills and meet better the needs of their customers and this leads to high levels of customer satisfaction and thus improve performance

ii. Organizational Factors

a. Extrinsic Motivation

Particularly, organizations are interested in motivating their employees due to its ability to enhance the performance, and this is because it enhances the performance of sales workforce. The interaction sales workforce have with customers is a factor of growth for businesses, and as such businesses must strive to motivate their sales workforce, because their interactions have greater implications for the organization's growth. The rapid and continuous increase in corporate competition is one of the reasons why organizations need to motivate the sales workforce. Due to this, sales has emerged as a marketing activity that is increasingly important to companies (Mercellino & John, 2024). Findings of numerous studies have shown that there is correlation between sales workforce motivation and performance. Different strategies are used by businesses to motivate their sales workforce. Nwude and Uduji (2013) who investigated the impact of selected rewards on the performance of sales managers focused on financial and non-financial rewards as factors that influence performance of sales workforce in the manufacturing industry. In order to predict interaction outcome and inter-dependency among the study variables. Findings of their study showed that commission incentive, salary compensation, bonus payment, recognition opportunity for promotion and advancement were the factors that accounted for 85% variance, implying that these were the key variables that influence sales workforce effectiveness and motivation.

Rodriquez et al. (2023) studied how intrinsic and extrinsic factors of motivation can influence the ability of salesforce to perform their sales roles. Using a meta-analysis approach these authors highlighted three key classes of individual motivations that are key to sales performance including goal orientation, cognitive choice, and work engagement. Nevertheless, it has been argued by scholars of sales management and marketing that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors have an influence on overall sales performance.

b. Training of Sales Workforce

Particularly, training is a concept that is multifaceted that includes different forms of training including coaching, well-designed internal courses, on-the-job training. The essence of effective training is to build the capacities and competencies of sales personnel through the improvement of their sales strategies, product knowledge, and customer relationship management systems. Particularly, in the time when sales processes are highly reliant on technological tools, sales workforce should equipped with the required skills to leverage on these tools and the benefit that can be derived from their use (Sager et al., 2014).

Salesforce training has been analysed as a determinant of sales workforce performance, and as such, training programs should

be adequately prepared for (Hutt & Speh, 2010). Therefore, it is crucial that periodic trainings are scheduled for sales workforce in order to improve the skills of experienced sales workforce, especially in the era where the marketplace is dynamic. The sales workforce must be equipped with the knowledge about the product line, the company, competitors, customer segment, and effective communication. Thus, it becomes paramount for the company to provide sales workforce including newly recruited salespeople, the Sales Representative, and Technical Sales Representative prior to their assignment in the marketplace. The training which is offered to sales workforce should cover marketing areas such as goal setting, customers farming, salesmanship, and time-setting as well as procedures of sales administration. Such trainings can support experienced sales workforce in terms of achieving the company goals and targets. The nature of the training will be determined based on the company needs of even based on the need analysis training for workforce.

Training cannot be effective in enhancing the performance of sales workforce if not properly planned and implemented. This implies that the quality of training and training hours play a critical role in determining the outcome of such trainings (Yotapditya & Sibarani, 2024). Through a time series analysis, these authors studied the influence of training hours on the performance of retail staff. This study employed the use of quantitative time series analysis to achieve the study aim. The findings revealed that the performance of retail sales staff is significantly influenced by the two variables, with the training hours having a greater effect. Their results showed that the monthly gross merchandise value improved according to the number of training hours and each salesperson. The findings highlighted the significance of sales training, because sales outcome can be improved by having a well-trained sales workforce. Consequently, the authors recommended that a balanced strategy should prioritize quality training for the optimization of sales success. As part of their recommendations for future studies, they noted the importance of studying other factors that like market conditions and customer satisfaction and the influence they have on sales performance.

Thus, training is crucial to the enhancement of sales workforce performance, because effective trainings have the potentials of improving attitudes, skills, knowledge, and performance of sales workforce (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). More so, for the trainings to be adaptive, meeting the changing needs of the sales, it has to be conducted continuously rather than on a one-time basis (Pascucci et al., 2023). Findings of previous studies have shown that a sales workforce that is trained is more competitive as compared to less-trained salesmen (Wardoyo et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has focused on investigating the factors that determine the performance of sales workforce. The literature review has revealed that the performance of sales workforce can be improved by factors like experience, intelligence and resourcefulness of sales personnel, as well as interpersonal relations, training, and motivation. Consequently, it becomes important for companies to employ strategies such motivation, and training to facilitate high performance of salesmen.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited by time factor, which did not allow the investigation of other variables that influence performance of sales workforce. More so, the scope of the study is also a limitation, as the study only focuses on investigating the factors that determine sales performance using on one roofing company.

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